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OSC Alerts President That Navy Falsified Fire and Emergency Training Records

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, D.C./April 25, 2018 – The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) today sent [a letter](#) to the President informing him that Department of Navy employees were found to have deliberately falsified critical training records of firefighters and emergency services employees. OSC’s review and the subsequent investigation by the Office of the Naval Inspector General (NAVINSGEN) have resulted in new agency policies that ensure the accuracy of training records and the readiness of emergency personnel on Navy bases.

The whistleblower, a firefighter and paramedic in the Fire and Emergency Services (F&ES) department at Naval Station Newport, Rhode Island, [discovered](#) that F&ES management falsified records to reflect its personnel had completed both mandatory and voluntary training on emergency response that were never attended or that never even occurred. In April 2016, the whistleblower observed discrepancies between the training sessions s/he recalled attending and those listed in the online training portal which maintains a database for all training received by F&ES employees. Other F&ES personnel found similar training discrepancies, especially in reference to required training courses necessary to maintain credentials to perform emergency services. OSC referred the allegations to the agency for investigation on two grounds: the agency’s improper maintenance of training records and the potential risk caused by F&ES personnel not receiving requisite training to perform their duties safely and responsibly.

An investigation by NAVINSGEN [substantiated](#) the whistleblower’s allegations, finding that F&ES administrators improperly created and maintained training records, erroneously recording that F&ES personnel had completed both required and voluntary training.

Based on OSC’s referral and the subsequent investigation, NAVINSGEN made several recommendations to all Naval installations to ensure compliance with agency regulations. These recommendations included requiring additional verification of records and implementing additional means of ensuring accountability for those signing off on training rosters. In March 2018, the agency reported to OSC that all NAVINSGEN recommendations had been implemented. The agency also reported that the new guidance stemming from the investigation will be formally incorporated into the next scheduled revision of Navy policy by the Chief of Naval Operations.

“The whistleblower’s disclosure in this case exposed an important flaw in the Navy’s Fire and Emergency Services training policies and practices. F&ES administrators failed to properly account for attendance in mandatory safety courses,” said **Special Counsel Henry J. Kerner**. “The Navy will be better served in emergency situations because a whistleblower disclosed wrongdoing.”

The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) is an independent federal investigative and prosecutorial agency. Our basic authorities come from four federal statutes: The Civil Service Reform Act, the Whistleblower Protection Act, the Hatch Act, and the Uniformed Services Employment & Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). OSC’s primary mission is to safeguard the merit system by protecting federal employees and applicants from prohibited personnel practices, especially reprisal for whistleblowing, and to serve as a safe channel for allegations of wrongdoing. For more information, please visit our website at www.osc.gov.